



SUPPLEMENT
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War Office, 6th September, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—

Lieutenant Albert CHOWNE, M.M. (NX.24405),
2/2 Australian Infantry Battalion, Australian Military Forces.

For most conspicuous bravery, brilliant leadership and devotion to duty during an attack on an enemy position on a narrow ridge near Dagua, New Guinea, on 25th March, 1945.

After the capture of Dagua, the main enemy force withdrew southwards from the beach to previously prepared positions on the flank of the Division. Further movement towards Wewak was impossible while this threat to the flank existed and the Battalion was ordered to destroy the enemy force.

'A' Company, after making contact with the enemy on a narrow ridge, was ordered to attack the position. The leading Platoon in the attack came under heavy fire from concealed enemy machine guns sited on a small rise dominating the approach. In the initial approach one member of this Platoon was killed and nine wounded, including the Platoon Commander, and the enemy continued to inflict casualties on our troops. Without awaiting orders, Lieutenant Chowne, whose Platoon was in reserve, instantly appreciated the plight of the leading Platoon and rushed the enemy's position. Running up a steep, narrow track, he hurled grenades which knocked out two enemy Light Machine Guns. Then, calling on his men to follow him and firing his sub-machine gun from the hip, he charged the enemy's position. Although he sustained two serious wounds in the chest, the impetus of his charge carried him 50 yards forward under the most intense machine gun and

rifle fire. Lieutenant Chowne accounted for two more Japanese before he was killed standing over three foxholes occupied by the enemy.

The superb heroism and self-sacrifice of this officer, culminating in his death, resulted in the capture of this strongly-held enemy position, ensured the further immediate success of his Company in this area and paved the way directly for the continuance of the Division's advance to Wewak.

War Office, 6th September, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—

No. VX.102142 Private Edward KENNA,
2/4 Australian Infantry Battalion,
Australian Military Forces.

In the South West Pacific at Wewak on 15th May, 1945, during the attack on the Wirui Mission features, Private Kenna's company had the task of capturing certain enemy positions. The only position from which observation for supporting fire could be obtained was continuously swept by enemy heavy machine gun fire and it was not possible to bring Artillery or Mortars into action.

Private Kenna's platoon was ordered forward to deal with the enemy machine gun post, so that the company operation could proceed. His section moved as close as possible to the bunker in order to harass any enemy seen, so that the remainder of the platoon could attack from the flank. When the attacking sections came into view of the enemy they were immediately engaged at very close range by heavy automatic fire from a position not previously disclosed. Casualties were suffered and the attackers could not move further forward.

Private Kenna endeavoured to put his Bren gun into a position where he could engage the bunker, but was unable to do so because of the nature of the ground. On his own initiative and without orders Private Kenna immediately stood up in full view of the enemy less than fifty yards away and engaged the bunker, firing his Bren gun from the hip. The enemy machine gun immediately returned Private Kenna's fire and with such accuracy that bullets actually passed between his arms and his body. Undeterred, he remained completely exposed and continued to fire at the enemy until his magazine was exhausted. Still making a target of himself, Private Kenna discarded his Bren gun and called for a rifle. Despite the intense machine gun fire, he seized the rifle and, with amazing coolness, killed the gunner with his first round.

A second automatic opened fire on Private Kenna from a different position and another of the enemy immediately tried to move into position behind the first machine gun, but Private Kenna remained standing and killed him with his next round.

The result of Private Kenna's magnificent bravery in the face of concentrated fire, was that the bunker was captured without further loss, and the company attack proceeded to a successful conclusion, many enemy being killed and numerous automatic weapons captured.

There is no doubt that the success of the company attack would have been seriously endangered and many casualties sustained but for Private Kenna's magnificent courage and complete disregard for his own safety. His action was an outstanding example of the highest degree of bravery.

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